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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phoenix Country Club Agrees to Stop Sex-Based Discrimination

(Phoenix, Ariz. – January 21, 2009) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the settlement of a landmark lawsuit against the Phoenix Country Club (PCC) in which the club agrees to drop all sex-based discrimination in its dining facilities.

The State's lawsuit, filed last September, alleged that PCC violated the Arizona Civil Rights Act's public accommodations provision prohibiting sex-based discrimination by refusing to serve women in its Men's Grill. The suit further alleged that the club retaliated against Logan and Barbara Van Sittert when they voiced opposition to PCC's segregation policy and filed a charge of discrimination with the Attorney General's Office.

"During this week of celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the historic inauguration of Barack Obama, we are proud to eliminate one more vestige of discrimination from a bygone era," Goddard said. "I also want to recognize the courage of Logan and Barbara Van Sittert in bringing this issue forward."

Under the agreement, upon the reopening of its indoor dining facilities in February when extensive renovations are completed, PCC will open all of its dining facilities, including the Men's Grill and Women's Grill, to all members, members' families and club guests and will not discriminate in providing any dining accommodations, advantages or privileges on the basis of sex.

PCC will also amend its internal rules to reflect this policy change and will send out a notice to its members advising that the club's dining facilities are, without condition, open to all members, members' families and guests and that anyone seeking to interfere with this change in policy will be in violation of club rules.

In addition, the agreement prohibits PCC from discriminating against the Van Sitterts for complaining about the sex discrimination in the Grills, for filing a charge of discrimination with the Attorney General's Office and for assisting the Attorney General with its lawsuit.

The State's lawsuit alleged that PCC fit the legal definition of a public accommodation. In the agreement, PCC says that it has made over recent months changes to its policies, procedures and practices to operate as a private club. The State accepts PCC's representation that it has taken steps to operate as a private club upon its planned reopening next month.

According to the lawsuit, the Van Sitterts complained to PCC's Board of Directors' president about the club's policy of excluding women from the Men's Grill. When the lawsuit was filed, the Men's Grill contained amenities that were superior to the amenities of the Women's Grill and other PCC dining areas. The Men's Grill was well-known within the business community as an ideal place to network, build business relationships and broker deals. The lawsuit further alleged that within days of the Van Sitterts submitting the letter, they were retaliated against by PCC members, whose actions included threats of suspension or expulsion against them.

The Arizona Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodation based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry. Any person who believes that their civil rights have been violated should call the Arizona Attorney General's Civil Rights Division toll-free at 1-877-491-5742, or toll free via TDD at 1-877-624-8090.

A copy of the complaint is attached and available on the Attorney General's website, www.azag.gov. For additional information, please contact Megan Erickson at (602) 542-8012.

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